



NICK FURY, AGENT OF...



MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

12¢
IND. 4
SEPT

SHIELD™



PROLOGUE

DEATH STALKS THE DAYLIGHT HOURS AS, SOMEWHERE IN THE SPRAWLING VASTNESS OF OUR NATION'S CAPITAL, AN ELECTRONICALLY AUGMENTED VOICE RINGS OUT... AND A STARTLED FACE STARES SUDDENLY UPWARD IN SHEER, STARK DISBELIEF--!

GREETINGS, NICK FURY! DID YOU TRULY IMAGINE YOU COULD FIND SAFETY IN THE MERE HEIGHT OF A ROOFTOP...

...WHEN IT HAS BEEN DULY AND INDELIBLY DECREED... THAT YOU MUST DIE!?

IT IS FINISHED!

NOTHING COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT BLAST OF IONIZED ALPHA-PARTICLES!

NICK FURY WILL BE DEAD BEFORE HE STRIKES THE STREET BELOW!

HAIL HYDRA!

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AH! NOW
AT LAST
THERE CAN
BE NO
DOUBT!

THE ACCURSED SECRET
ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS
SHIELD HAS LOST ITS NEW
DIRECTOR...EVEN BEFORE HE
COULD BE **SWORN IN!**

**"AND
NOW
IT
BEGINS"**

AND NOW, ALSO, THERE
CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT
YOU HAVE BEEN WITNESSING
A SHOCKING RE-ENACTMENT
OF SCENES FROM NICK FURY'S
DRAMATIC DEBUT AS HEAD OF
SHIELD, AS RE-TOLED BY:

**STAN
LEE**
EDITOR

**ROY
THOMAS**
WRITER

**FRANK
SPRINGER**
ARTIST

**SAM
ROSEN**
LETTERER

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

AS, IN THE SELF-SAME SHORT
SPAN OF SEVEN FATEFUL
SECONDS...

HERE COMES THAT
C.I.A. CLOWN NOW.
AS IF OUT FOR A
SUNDAY STROLL!

HE'LL SOON LEARN
THERE IS NOWHERE
ON EARTH HE CAN RELAX
... WHILE HYDRA EXISTS!

KROMP!

AND HYDRA
WILL NEVER
PERISH!

BUT, ALAS, THE
SAME CANNOT
BE SAID FOR
NICK FURY!

WRAAKK!

PAH!
THIS WAS ALMOST
TOO EASY!

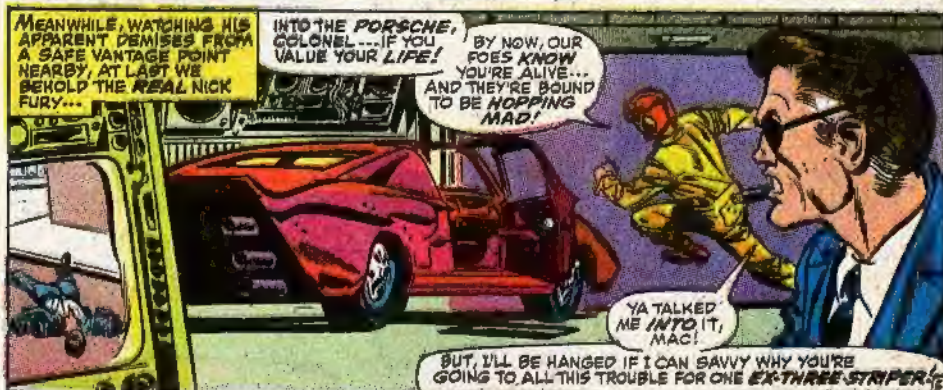
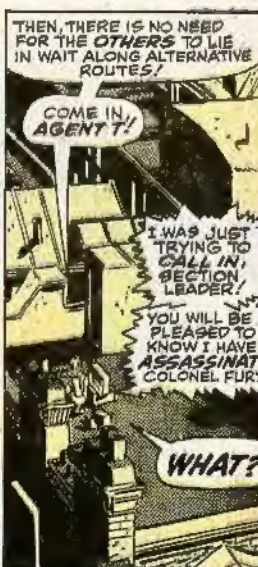
I DID NOT
EVEN NEED MY
SPECIAL PRO-
TECTIVE
ARMOR!

AND YET...
IT MAKES
FINISHING
MY TASK
THAT MUCH
SIMPLER!

NOW TO INFORM
MY SECTION
LEADER,
WITHOUT
DELAY!

AGENT R
REPORTING,
FROM
STATION 3!
I HAVE JUST
KILLED
NICK FURY!

KRUNCH!





IT'S NOT JUST FOR AN
EX-SERGEANT, SIR...
OR FOR A COLONEL
IN THE C.I.A.!

BESIDES, WE'VE BEEN
EXPERIMENTING WITH
LIFE MODEL DECOYS
FOR SOME TIME...AND
TODAY WAS THEIR FIRST
FIE-V TEST!

LIFE MODEL
DECOYS, HUH?
SO THAT'S WHAT
YOU CALL THEM
POOR MAN'S NICK
FURYS!

OKAY, SO I'M USED
TO BEIN' THE BIG BRASS!
GUINEA PIG!

BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T
CLUE ME IN ON WHY THOSE
JOKERS TRIED TO CREAM
ME BACK THERE!

I'M SORRY, COLONEL,
BUT I'VE TOLD YOU
ALMOST EVERYTHING
I'M AT LIBERTY TO
REVEAL!

JUST THE SAME, SOMEBODY
BETTER BRIEF ME BEFORE THIS
DAY'S OVER, OR...

IN ORDER TO
ENDANGER
AS FEW
CIVILIANS
AS POSSIBLE...
WHEN WE'RE
STRAFED!

HEY! WHY'RE YA TURNIN'
OFF THE HIGHWAY...
ONTO A SIDE ROAD?

WHEN
WE'RE
WHAT??

LOOK UP,
COLONEL...
INTO THE
SKY!

HUSH-
HUSH, HUH?
AWRIGHT, WE'LL
PLAY IT YOUR
WAY!

AND, AS THE THOROUGHLY
PUZZLED NICK FURY COMPLIES,
A SUDDEN BARRIER-SHATTERING
ROAR IS HEARD FROM ABOVE...

...AS A STRANGELY-
MARKED FIGHTER
JET STREAKS DOWN
FROM THE SUN-SPLASHED
HEAVENS...ON AN ERRAND
OF PURE DESTRUCTION...



THEN, IN ALMOST
LESS TIME THAN
IT TAKES TO
READ THESE
DEATHLESS
LINES...

HOLY HANNAH!
THAT BIRD IS PEPPERIN'
US... JUST LIKE YOU
SAID!

OF COURSE! DID YOU
THINK THAT WE WERE
UNPREPARED FOR
SUCH AN EVENTUALITY?

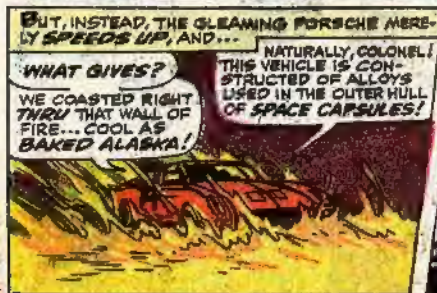


PHOOOMF!

FOR MY MONEY, MISTER,
YOUR BIG TALK'S JUST
COVERIN' UP ONE KING-
SIZE DEATH WISH!

THOSE WERE NARALM
FIRE BOMBS THAT
GRATE JUST DROPPED
AHEAD OF US!

HIT THAT BRAKE
...AND HIT IT
HARD!



BUT, INSTEAD, THE GLEAMING PORSCHE MERE-
LY SPEEDS UP, AND...

WHAT GIVES?

WE COASTED RIGHT
THRU THAT WALL OF
FIRE... COOL AS
BAKED ALASKA!

NATURALLY, COLONEL!
THIS VEHICLE IS CON-
STRUCTED OF ALLOYS
USED IN THE OUTER HULL
OF SPACE CAPSULES!



NOW, PLEASE EXCUSE ME...
WHILE I DISPOSE OF
THAT PLANE!

FROM HERE?
YER PUTTIN'
ME ON.

WHAT'RE
YA GONNA
DO... SEND
'EM A NASTY
TELEGRAM?



YOU'RE NOT
AS FAR WRONG
AS YOU MIGHT
IMAGINE,
COLONEL!

WE ARE
SENDING THEM
SOMETHING...
TWO SCALED-
DOWN SIDE-
WINDER
MISSILES,
TO BE EXACT!

IT ISN'T
POSSIBLE!
THE CAR HAS
FIRED
ROCKETS...
HOMING IN
ON US!

COMMENCE
EVASION
TACTICS AT
ONCE!

REPEAT...
COMMENCE...

THE FOLLOWING INSTANT, AS THE ENEMY PLANE
VANISHES IN A SINGLE, SEARING FLASH OF LIGHT..

KA-BOOOM!

MISTER, I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT YER
GAME IS...

BUT, IF YOU'RE
LOOKIN' TO IMPRESS
ME... YA JUST MADE
IT!

...WHICH BRINGS ME AROUND
TO MY NEXT LITTLE QUESTION!

WHAT AGENCY ARE
YA WITH? YOU'VE GOT
OUR G-2 WEAPONS
BEAT A MILE!

I SERVE
THE
AMERICAN
DIVISION OF A SECRET
INTERNATIONAL ORGANI-
ZATION!

ITS CODE
NAME IS...
SHIELD!

SHIELD? IT MUST
BE TOP SECRET,
AWRIGHT!

I'VE GOT PRIORITY
CLEARANCE, AND I
NEVER EVEN
HEARD OF IT!

HEY! WHAT IN
SAM HILL...?

DON'T BE ALARMED,
COLONEL FURY...

I'M MERELY
ACTIVATING THE MECHANISM
WHICH CONVERTS THE PORSCHE
INTO AN AIR CAR!

WE DON'T
DARE WASTE
TIME BY
STICKING
AROUND TO
ANSWER ANY
POLICE
INQUIRIES!

ONE
THING'S
FOR SURE...
YA DIDN'T
DREAM UP
THESE GIZMOS
TO FIGHT
LITTERBUGS!

WHO WERE
THOSE CRUMBS
THAT WERE
GUNNIN' FOR
US?

THEY WERE
AGENTS OF THE
MOST DEADLY,
RUTHLESS
GROUP THE
WORLD HAS
EVER KNOWN...

THEY
CALL THEM-
SELVES...
HYDRA!

A FLYING CAR!
SO THAT'S HOW
SHIELD GOT FURY
AWAY FROM US!

THE MASTER WILL
BE SORELY
DISPLEASED!

AGENT C
CALLING SECTION
LEADER... TARGET
HAS ESCAPED US!

OUR MISSION MUST BE
REGARDED AS... A FAILURE!

THUS IT IS THAT, WITHIN MOMENTS, THE FOREMENTIONED SECTION LEADER STEALTHILY APPROACHES A HIGHLY SECRET CHAMBER... SOMEWHERE IN THE VERY HEART OF THE UNSUSPECTING CITY...

MINE WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY... BUT, THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE... IS DEATH!

...DEATH OR SUCH PUNISHMENT AS SHALL MAKE THE LIVING ENVY THE DEAD!

AND YET, NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FAILED IN ANY MISSION!

PERHAPS THE MASTER WILL BE MERCIFUL... JUST THIS ONCE... JUST THIS ONCE!

AGENT L... MAKE YOUR REPORT... IN THE MOST CONCISE TERMS!

DOES NICK FURY LIVE... OR HAS HE BEEN EXECUTED AS I ORDERED?

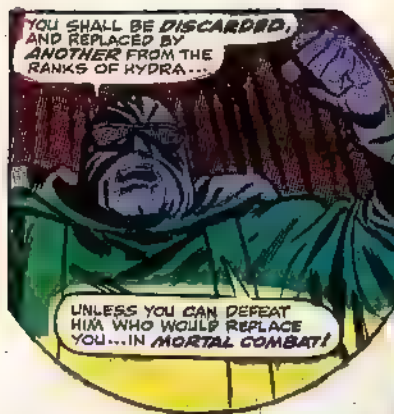
HE... LIVES, SIRE! BUT, IT WAS NOT MY FAULT...!

BUT, SCANT SECONDS LATER, EVEN SUCH HALTING AS OPTIMISM AS THIS PROVES BUT A FORN HOPE, AS...

SILENCE!

SPARE ME, AT LEAST, YOUR SNIVELING WHINES OF SELF-PITY!

DO YOU TRULY IMAGINE THERE IS ANYTHING YOU CAN SAY THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR ULTIMATE FATE?



YOU SHALL BE DISCARDED,
AND REPLACED BY
ANOTHER FROM THE
RANKS OF HYDRA...

UNLESS YOU CAN DEFEAT
HIM WHO WOULD REPLACE
YOU...IN MORTAL COMBAT!



NOW, TAKE YOUR PLACE UPON
THE PENDULUM!

BUT, MASTER
...THE MAN I
MUST BATTLE
HOLDS A
WEAPON!

AND I...
AM
UNARMED!!

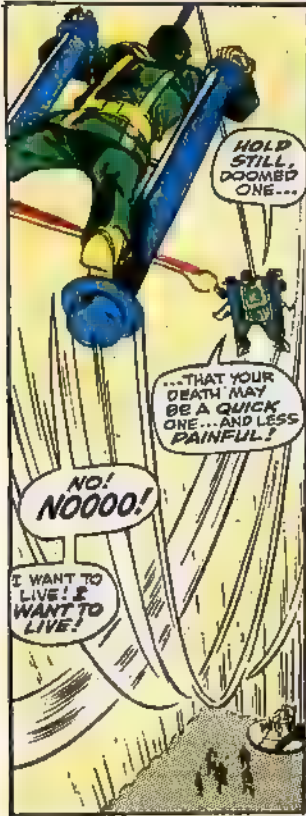
OF COURSE! IT
IS INTENDED THAT
YOU LOSE...AND THAT
YOU DIE...



...UNLESS YOU CAN
TRIUMPH BY DECEIT...
BY TRICKERY!

AND NOW, LET
THE COMBAT
COMMENCE!

THUS, THE DEADLY QUEL BEGINS...



HOLD
STILL,
DOOMED
ONE...

...THAT YOUR
DEATH MAY
BE A QUICK
ONE...AND LESS
PAINFUL!

NO!
NOOOO!

I WANT TO
LIVE! I
WANT TO
LIVE!

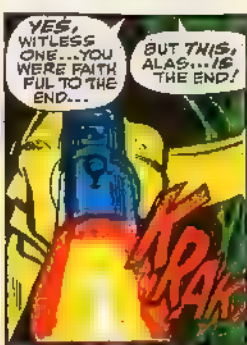


WEAKLING!
DO NOT ALL MEMBERS
OF HYDRA PLEDGE TO
GIVE THEIR VERY
LIVES TO THE
CAUSE...

BUT, I'VE
BEEN LOYAL...
FAITHFUL
TO THE END!

...TO THE
ONE WHOM
WE CALL THE
MASTER?

NOW, IF ONLY
I CAN GRAB
HIS GUN...
BEFORE...



YES,
WITLESS
ONE...YOU
WERE FAITH-
FUL TO THE
END...

BUT THIS,
ALAS...IS
THE END!



THEN, AS A LIFELESS FORM SPRAWLS,
FACE DOWN, ON THE MARBLED FLOOR...

HE WILL FAIL YOU NO
MORE, MASTER!

PREPARE TO
UNMASK,
AGENT H...
AND JOIN THE
CIRCLE OF
ASSASSINS!

FOR, YOU
ARE THE
FIRST
FEMALE
EVER TO
ATTAIN SO
EXALTED A RANK!

SPEAK,
NOW, THE
OATH WHICH
HAS BEEN
SWORN IN
BLOOD!

WHILE,
IN A
BARKENED
ROOM, NOT FAR
AWAY... AND YET
COUNTLESS WORLDS
DISTANT... NICK FURY
WROTE...

SORRY ABOUT THE
DELAY, COLONEL!

BUT, YOU'LL
UNDERSTAND
THAT EVEN WITH YOU...
THERE MUST BE A
FINAL CHECK...

BEFORE YOU CAN BE
ADMITTED TO THE
INNER COUNCIL
OF SHIELD!

PLAY ALL THE
GAMES YA WANT,
MAC... I'M ON THE
GOVERNMENT
PAYROLL, Y'KNOW!

HAIL HYDRA!
IMMORTAL
HYDRA!

WE SHALL
NEVER BE
DESTROYED!

CUT OFF
A LIMB...
AND TWO
MORE
SHALL TAKE
ITS PLACE!

WE SERVE
NONE BUT
THE MASTER
...AS THE WORLD
SHALL SOON
SERVE US!

HAIL
HYDRA!

ME, I WAS JUST
THINKIN' ABOUT ALL
THE THINGS THAT CAN
HAPPEN TO A JOE
IN ONE LIFETIME...

...AND WONDERIN'
HOW A MULE-HEADED
EX-COMMANDO EVER
WOUND UP HERE...
WHEREVER I AM!

IT WU'N'T EXACTLY NO **SED**
OF **ROSES** BACK IN THE **BYG**
ONE... NO MATTER WHAT KINDA
NUTTY **MOVIES** THEY MAKE
ABOUT IT NOWADAYS!

MEH WE
DIDN'T HAVE THE
A-BOMB HANGIN'
OVER OUR HEADS
BUT IT NEVER KILLED
ANYBODY DEADER
THAN A **NAZI**
LUGER!

SEEMS LIKE ME
AN THE **HOWLERS**
BLASTED THE
CRANKED
OLD BOY TO THE
BYG... **BYG**
AND THE
BYG!

NOT TO MENTION
A COUPLE IN THE
PACIFIC!

LAND
SEA
AIR

YOU **ARMED**
AND WE **FIGHT**

ON
MEH
EVEN **ARMED**

GUESS I'M
STILL FIGHTIN' MY
WAR, IN A WAY...
ONLY NOW THE BATTLES
ARE USUALLY A LITTLE
QUINTER... WITH
FEWER **HEAD-**
LINES...

...AN' THE BATTLE-
GROUND'S AS LIABLE
TO BE A **BACK ALLEY**
AS A MINED BEACH.

SWHEW! THAT WUZ QUITE A **SPEECH** FOR AN OL' WAR-HORSE, HUH?

BUT, IT'S GOT NUTHIN' TO DO WITH WHY I'M HERE TODAY!

PERHAPS IT **DOES**, COLONEL!

MR. STARK!

THEN, EVERYTHING MUST BE **READY!**

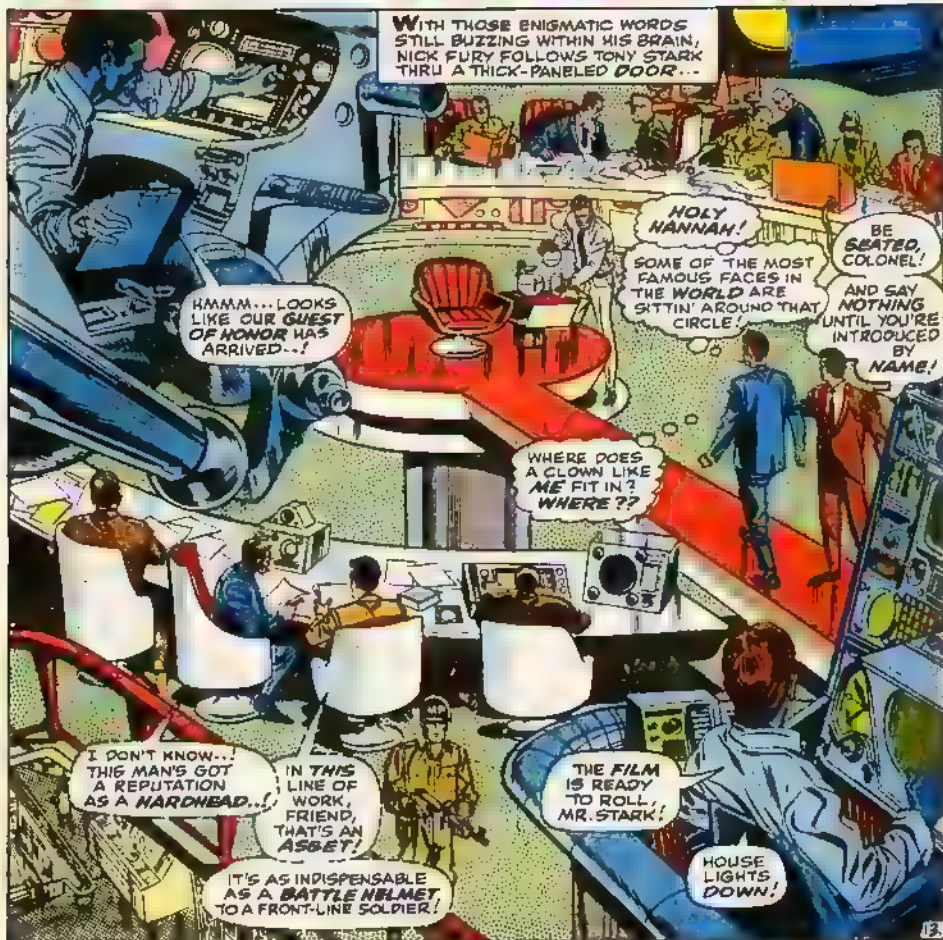
MR. STARK? TONY STARK? **THE TONY STARK?**

I SEE YOU'VE BEEN DOING YOUR **HOMEWORK**, COLONEL... SINCE THE C.I.A. HAS OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED ME WITH **BODYGUARDS!**

COULDN'T LET OLD GLORY'S NUMBER ONE **PLAYBOY ARMS INVENTOR** STUB HIS TOE, COULD WE?

IT'S A REAL **PLEASURE**, MR. STARK.

I HOPE YOU **STILL** FEEL THAT WAY... WHEN THIS DAY IS OVER!



NEXT, AS THE HEAVILY-GUARDED CHAMBER IS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS...

WHY DON'TCHA GET TO THE POINT, MR. STARK? WHY AM I HERE? AND WHERE ARE WE?

THAT YOU SHALL LEARN, COLONEL...

...AFTER YOU OBSERVE OUR FILM!

OKAY, OKAY... SO I'M A ONE-MAN CAPTIVE AUDIENCE!

BUT, IF IT COMES ON LIKE ONE BIG COMMERCIAL, I'M CUTTIN' OUT!

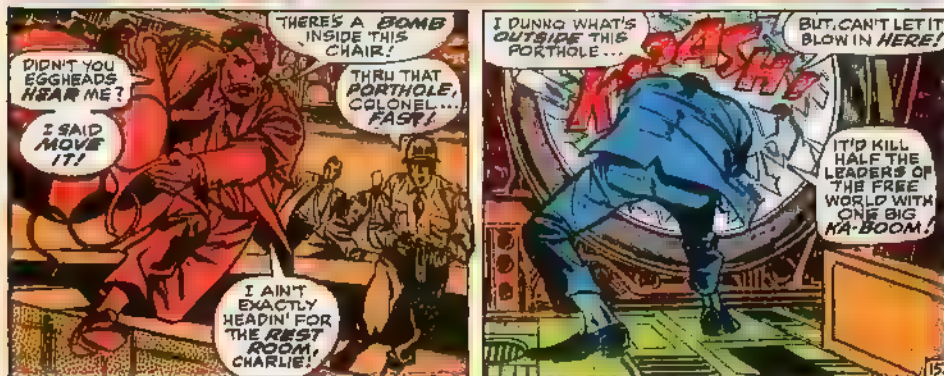
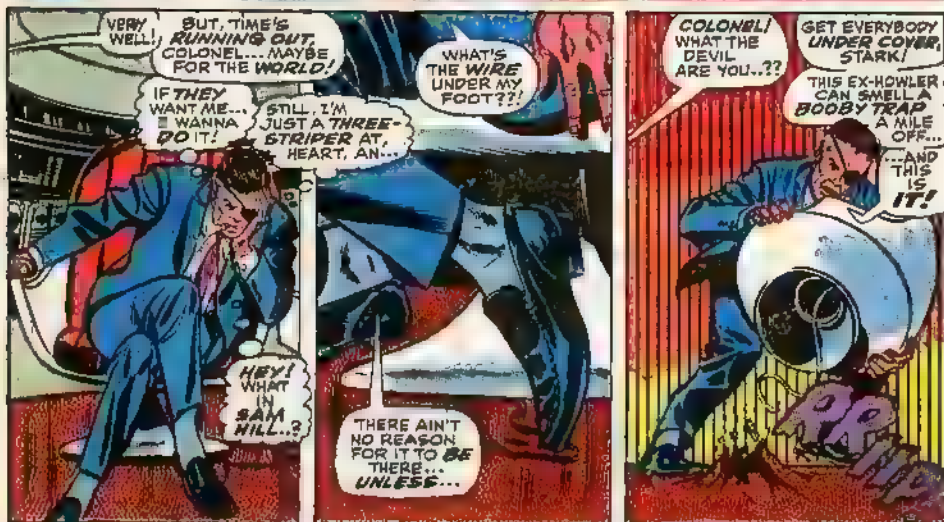
"IF IT DOES," NARRATES TONY STARK, "IT WON'T SOUND LIKE A FREE PLUG FOR SHIELD... BUT FOR THE SINISTER GROUP KNOWN AS... HYDRA..."

"YES, COLONEL. THOSE ARE HYDRA'S PLANES, SHIPS AND SUBS... AN ARSENAL LARGER THAN THAT OF MOST ENTIRE NATIONS..."

"THESE CAPTURED FILMS SHOW HOW MIND-STAGGERING... HOW ALMOST LIMITLESS... IS THE POWER OF HYDRA... BUT THEY DON'T TELL US WHERE THE ORGANIZATION'S SECRET HQ IS LOCATED..."

"AND, AS FOR ITS LEADERSHIP, WE KNOW ONLY THAT IT IS HEADED BY ONE MAN... THE SUPREME HYDRA... A SINISTER FIGURE DEDICATED TO THE VERY DOWNFALL OF CIVILIZATION... AS WE KNOW IT..."





CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

AND THEN, NICK FURY SEES
WHERE HE IS... THOUSANDS
OF FEET ABOVE EARTH...
RIDING ALOFT IN A GIGANTIC
HELICOPTER WHICH SERVES
AS THE MOBILE COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS FOR SHIELD'S
SUPREME INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL... AS EVER-VIGILANT
MILITARY JETS MAINTAIN A
24-HOUR PATROL AROUND
THE INCREDIBLE SKY CRAFT...!

WHOOOOW!

*FOOTNOTE FROM RECAPIN' ROY:
FRANKLY, BEDAZZLED ONES. WE
COULDN'T THINK OF ANY BETTER
CAPTION TO ACCOMPANY THIS
MAGNIFICENT ILLU THAN THE ONE
SMILIN' STAN WROTE WAY BACK
IN STRANGE TALES #135, SO
THERE IT IS... RIGHT DOWN TO THE
LAST WHOOOOW!



THAT EXPLOSION
WOULD'VE BLOWN
THE HELI-CARRIER
TO BITS!

I WANNA SEE EVERY
TECHNO THAT WIRED
THIS SHIP! MOVE!

YESSIR!

AN' WHOEVER
SET IT I'LL PLANT
ANOTHER
ONE...

UNLESS
WE FIND
'IM!

BOY... THAT
GUY ALREADY
ACTS LIKE HE'S
THE HEAD OF
SHIELD!



BUT NICK FURY
HAS ONLY BEGUN
TO SHOUT...

POST
GUARDS
AT EVERY
PORTHOLE!

COMMANDER
ALL PARACHUTES!

AWRIGHT,
FURY...
SO YER
GIVIN' OUT
WITH
ORDERS LIKE
IT WAS THE
BIG ONE
ALL OVER!

NOBODY
LEAVES THIS
SHIP.
NOBODY!!

WELL, MEBBE
IT IS...
MEBBE
THIS IS
THE
BIGGEST
WAR OF
ALL...!

YOU...
SOLDIER
... HOLD 'ER
RIGHT
THERE!

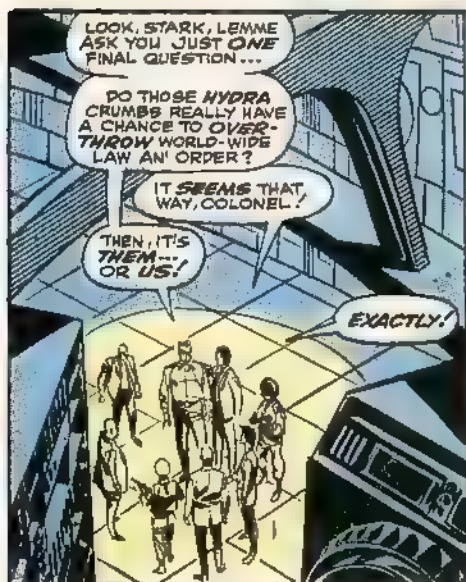
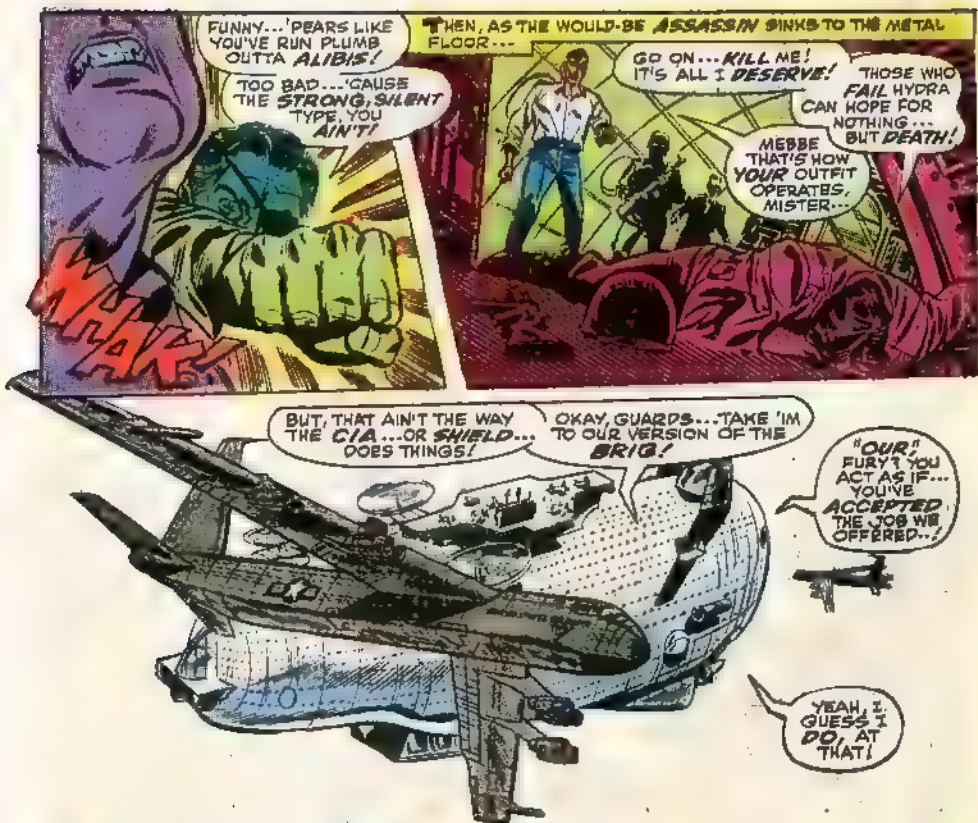
UH OH...
JUST THOUGHT
OF SOMETHIN'!

DON'T MAKE ME
TELL YA TWICE,
MISTER!

HUH?
WHATE
UP,
COLONEL?

I WAS JUST HEADING
FOR ORDNANCE SECTION
...TO MAKE SURE NOBODY'S TAMPER-
ING WITH SHIELD'S WEAPONRY!





GENTLEMEN, MY WORK HERE IS **DONE!** SHIELD HAS FOUND...
A LEADER!

LOOKS LIKE **SOMEBODY** HAS TO SMASH HYDRA!

SO, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE **ME!!**

BRAVE WORDS, COLONEL FURY...
PERHAPS ALMOST AS **COURAGEOUS** AS THEY ARE **FOOL-HARDY!**

KLIK!

FOR, THE EYES OF HYDRA ARE **WITHOUT NUMBER...**
AND THEY ARE **EVERYWHERE!**

AND, HYDRA IS **IMMORTAL...**

WHILE YOU, MY DEAR DIRECTOR OF SHIELD, ARE **NOT!**

SO, WE SHALL **PLAY YOUR LITTLE GAME, NICK FURY...**
AND SEE, IN THE END, WHETHER IT IS **SHIELD** OR **HYDRA** WHICH SURVIVES!!

THUS IT **BEGAN...** AND THUS HAS IT **CONTINUED**, ALMOST TO THIS VERY DAY... THIS UNENDING, VICTORY-LESS WAR BETWEEN THOSE WHO WOULD REDUCE CIVILIZATION TO SMOKING **RUBBLE...** AND THOSE WHO WOULD DEFEND THE LIBERTIES FOR WHICH MEN HAVE FOUGHT AND DIED... THE DEDICATED AGENTS OF **SHIELD!!** (30)

NOTE: OUR LETTERS SECTION APPEARS AFTER NEXT PAGE...

MORE HYSTERICAL HOOPLA AND HANGUPS FROM YOUR HOWLIN' HOUSE OF IDEAS!

ITEM! Remember when STAN the MAN wrote just about every superhero yarn we published during the early days of Marvel? Well, the reason we've been able to expand our output and to bring you more of the mags you've been clamoring for is because we've gradually found other scribes who've been able to capture the mad, modern Marvel mood. The first of these sensational scribes is our now-associate editor, Rascally ROY THOMAS, our poker-playing pundit of the pandemonious plot! Next, we leaped onto an old buddy of Roy's, Garry GARY FRIDGICH, our swingin', singin', folk-song-singin' assistant ed. But, not content to rest on our laurels, we were lucky enough to snare Affable ARCHIE GOODWIN, former editor, author, and bluishin' bon vivant, who brings his own scintillatin' style to the majesty of Marvel. And now, just a few months later, we announce with pride that another two stalwarts who've toiled elsewhere for in these many years have finally seen the light and joined the ranks of True Believers here at the batty Bullpen. (We'll introduce 'em in another ish!) So, where once there was just poor, slavin', long-suffering Stan, our leader now has five fabulous, far-out fantasy-writin' friends to help us prove we mean it when we say: "Hang onto your hat, here — Marvel's taking over the world!" (Or, wouldja believe Yancy Street?)

ITEM! But, with every bit of good news, there is often its exact opposite. And so, with heavy hearts, we announce the departure of one of the Bullpen's most popular pixies — Fabulous FLO STEINBERG who bids us a fond farewell to seek her fortunes in another field of endeavor. Lovely Flo had won the collective hearts of Marveldom Assembled in the years during which she helped to answer the ever-growing mountain of mail which sometimes threatened to engulf us all. Face Front, Flo! The best of luck to you where s'er you go.

ITEM! For those of you who've been vacationing on another planet for the past few months, we're gonna repeat the six swingin' in ranks of Marveldom for serious study and transcendental meditation! Now for Odin's sake, memorize 'em carefully, 'cause we're starting to get writers' cramp!

RFO (Real Frantic One): A buyer of at least 3 Marvel mags each month.

QNS (Quite 'Nuff Sayer): A fortunate frantic one who's had a letter printed.

TTB (Titanic True Believer): A divinely-inspired no-prize winner.

KOF (Keeper Of The Flame): One who recruits a newcomer to Marvel's rockin' ranks.

PMH (Permanent Marvelite Maximus): Anyone possessing all four of the other titles.

FFF (Fearless Front Face): An honorary title, bestowed for devotion to Marvel above and beyond the call of duty.

But, even if you're just a lowly F.F.M. (Futile Forbush-Man, natch), take heart, hero — we love you just the same.



STAN'S SOAPBOX

This one's a real surprise! You've seen Herb Trimpe's name listed as "inker" all over the place in our mags. Well, a few weeks ago we saw some of his original drawings and realized that we've had an exciting, top-notch penciller hidden right under our quivering noses! So, not being shy, we asked Happy Herbie what he'd like to draw, and he told us. It seems that Mr. Trimpe is a dyed-in-the-wool fan of World War I airplane dogfights! And, since the rest of your Bullpen are shameless superhero fans, we decided to combine the two. Which is just our long-winded way of telling you not to dare miss MARVEL SUPERHEROES #16, which features one of the most daringly different superheroes of all — The Phantom Eagle! And now, we've gotta cut out — Country Joe and the Fish just arrived to visit us — and we don't wanna keep 'em out of the water too long!

Excelsior.

Smiley

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

Marvel's Mags On Sale Right Now!

THE 35¢ SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #1: Last chance, web-spinner! The great second ish goes on sale next month, and these'll be gone forever. We couldn't sleep nights! We thought you'd missed the longest Spidey saga ever presented! And oh, that artwork!

NOT BRAND-ECNH #9: This one, too, is on sale for a second month, to make sure that no Flame-Keeper among you misses it. It's got more pages, laughs, and lunacy than ever before. And dig those sizzlin' supereffects!

SILVER SURFER #1: Featuring the longest, and possibly the greatest Origin story ever illustrated! There's no doubt about it — the Silver Surfer is certain to equal Spidey himself in popularity! And we should worry — they're both ours!

FANTASTIC FOUR #78: The story fandom has long awaited! Never has the super-powerful Thing faced a grimmer problem — or been forced to make a more desperate decision! It's dynamite! And, wait'll you see who the villain is!

SPIDER-MAN #64: Now that Spidey knows the Vulture lives again, he has to answer another question — how can one lone wall-crawler, with more problems than he can wiggle a web at, defeat the most deadly foe of all?

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #16: Just as we promised you — a full-length blockbuster of mystery and action, starring the all-new Phantom Eagle! Plus, the usual mildly magnificent mish-mash of masked misanthropes!

AVENGERS #35: So you think you learned the full secret of the dread Crimson Cow! Let ish! Well, don't believe it, pilgrim... till you see the Avengers slug it out to the finish with his malevolent Masters of Evil! Hoo-boy!

X-MEN #47: The spotlight this month is on Iceman and the ever-exciting Beast, as they clash head-on with the mysterious Mute Yogi! And, when you find out who he really is, you'll know why he's a lot more dangerous than he sounds!

DAREDEVIL #43: No, it's not a gag! It's not an (echh!) imaginary tale! It's for real! DD finally battles the one and only — Captain America — with no punches pulled! It's the action-hit of the month — a brain-blast!

MIGHTY THOR #153: Truly one of Thor's most epic sagas! Although the Thunder God has battled many foes before, never has any come as close to the destruction of the entire universe as has — Mangog! This one's a must!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #105: Toward Look who's back — none other than the blue-jeaning Batroc, accompanied by the Living Laser and the sinister SWORDSMAN! For fantastic action beyond compare, wait'll you see Cap tackle "Batroc's Brigade"!

INCREDIBLE HULK #107: Our green-skinned goliath faces not one, but three deadly threats... the far-eastern counterpart of Shield, the menacing Mandarin — and perhaps the one thing that even his titanic strength can't combat!

IRON MAN #5: Possibly the most unusual transistorized saga of all, as our great golden avenger rockets into the far future, where public enemy number one is none other than... Tony Stark! And wait'll you meet Carburi!

SUB-MARINER #5: For all those frantic ones who thought we'd never come up with a non-Atlantean underwater baddie for Namor to fight, we proudly present the one and only Tiger Shark! He's deep-sea dynamite!

MARVEL'S SPACE-BORN SUPERHERO! CAPTAIN MARVEL #3: Who — or what — is the amazing Metazoid? Don't even try to guess — until you see him come face to face with the spaceman called Mar-Vel in an action-packed, TNT-charged duel to the death! 'Nuff said!



DR. STRANGE #172: Dormammu's back — and Doc Strange has got him! Or, is it the other way around? And, breathe there a Marvelite who'll dare miss Gentleman Gene Colan's great art job on our favorite mystic master?

SGT. FURY #57: It's a mission of mercy, as Fury and his hard-hittin' Howlers plummet into Hitlerland to rescue Jim Morita's captured Nisei Squad from a Nazi POW camp! Need we say more, battle-mag buffs?

CAPTAIN SAVAGE #5: Who but mind-bending Marvel would dare put out a war-mag about... a counterfeiting plot? But, if you think they're in for a milk run — forget it! It's a block-bustin', brain-bogglin' blast!

MARVEL COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS #16: The FF, Iron Man, Dr. Strange, and the Hulk in some of the greatest, never-to-be-forgotten epics from the past! What we call it a collectors' item, we're not just whistlin' "The Merry Marvel Matzka"!

MARVEL TALES #16: The Beetle — Tomorrow Man — Plant Man — and the sinister Serpent! (Against Spidey, Thor, the torrid Torch, and Marvel Boy, natch!) A foursome of the most sense-staggering battles since the Bulgai!

DON'T YIELD, WRITE SHIELD.

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 625 MADISON AVE., N.Y., N.Y. 10022

Just in case you're wondering why this ish was done by the awesome abilities of Frank Springer, and not the towering talents of Jim Steranko, it's because the jaunty one is hard at work on the development of a brand-new Marvel literary and artistic trail-blazer! Watch for it! (But Jim will be back, next issue!)

Dear Stan,

This is a letter of advice from a long-loyal Marvel fan who wants Marvel to stay the greatest. Ish #1 of NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD was the most horrible disgrace to Marvel that I have ever laid eyes on! You had a much better story in #135 of STRANGE TALES than any that you have published in the last six months. SHIELD has really gone to the dogs. For one thing, Jim Steranko may be a tip-top card shark, carnival man, etcetera, but as a plotter and scripster, he just doesn't have it. Put a qualified writer on the mag and you will be started on the right road. Have him write down-to-Earth stories. Stan, as a professional writer, you must know that SHIELD #1 was truly amateurish writing. Sensationalism. Marvel used to portray the world as it really is, and in your more popular publications, it still does. But how could anyone (except the clods who bought the mag to flip through it and exclaim, "ooaah, psychedellic!") relate any of that garbage in #1 to anything in real life? You've taken two fifty-year-old war veterans, and twisted their activities to follow the fads of a few of your younger generation Marvelites. And don't say that you're giving the people what they want either, because I know the mag was more popular when it was written by a trained writer. Give the people what they really want: believable stories in a mortal atmosphere. They don't want to read about an indestructible god with an infallible brain and body. Please, for the sake of the name Marvel, rescue Nick Fury from the gutters of sensationalism, and send him back to his former high standards of good taste.

Edward Ramero, 1212 Valencia
Denver, Colorado 80220

Ed, wish there was something we could say to change your mind about SHIELD! Better yet, how about reading some of SHIELD's mail to enlighten you on a point or two you may have missed in our story content! Also, we trust it'll change your mind about those who enjoyed it! Clods they ain't!!

Dear Stan and Jim,

It isn't very difficult to imagine just what transpires when Rockin' Robin (Fabulous Flo isn't here any more) hands Stan Lee the latest Jim Steranko manuscript. Stan the Man examines the pages before him, momentarily puzzled. Sentences sear into the brain tissue, stabbing bolts literally leap from the printed page into the sub-conscious. The manuscript probably begins with: FADE IN: (TEASER) A STONE

TOWER — ESTABLISHING SETTING — NIGHT IN. SILHOUETTE. 6 pages in the script's bold black type conveys further images. I suppose that it would read like this: BABY: "I guess everything's going to be okay, now! Except the weather! Looks like it's starting to . . ." INTERCUT — Val and Nick — Val: "rain. They say it makes you beautiful!" And Stan leans back in his worn chair and sighs, "I wonder how long it's going to take Jim to remember that he's on Madison Ave. and not in Hollywood." The director of the Marvel Bull-pen sits there for a moment, lost in thought, and then says, "But whatever, this is going to make a smash premiere issue for SHIELD." And it did, seriously, make a grand debut. "Who is Scorpio?" Is one of the most deeply penetrating portraits in literature yet to pour forth from the pen of this talented writer/artist. It is possible to write in depth on almost any given panel on any given page that Steranko illustrates. But which one should be given the attention? The cover? A combination of op art, intricately woven mazes of children's building blocks, carefully positioned figures. The splash panel? Point of view? That complete with mood and atmosphere, shadows extending cast by a barren moon. Or would one contemplate and analyze the panel in which Nick Fury ponders his latest mystery, cool and relaxed until a faint film of sweat drips down his face. Perhaps, a few words might suffice for almost every page: symmetry. Symmetry and purpose, they are the key words to every page Steranko brings to life. The word reality insists on being admitted into the proceedings. There is a reality about the events and characters that comments on life and existence, which is a perfect blend of poing and complications. Steranko's words are powerful complements to the illustrations, capturing entire lives, separate and distinct lives which are apart from one another yet woven together in the mass of humanity. A brief montage shot of Flip Mason standing in a booth while thinking of his wife and child moments before his entire universe is ended is a minor masterpiece. This in itself would be cause for sufficient examination. The nuances of characters, the span of a life-time (Flip Mason's) are expressed in merely one searing black and white image. A telephone cord dangling down the length of a page, across the lives of those who witness the event, mirrors the thin thread which is life dangling tantalizingly before all of us. The concluding panel in this premiere issue is black and white, deathly still and somber, and closes with stunning impact. What further words can I say than these to express it all . . . "and it rained most of that day . . . and far into the night."

Donald F. McGregor, 43 Wildwood Ave.
Providence, Rhode Island 02907

We were overwhelmed by Don's definitive analysis of SHIELD's premiere ish! Stan said he couldn't have put it better himself! Thanks, Don . . . eloquently written!

KNOW YE THESE, THE HALLOWED RANKS OF MARVELDOM:

(REAL FRANTIC ONE) — A BUYER OF AT LEAST 3 MARVEL MAGS A MONTH.

(QUITE 'MUFF SAYER) — A FORTUNATE FRANTIC ONE WHO'S HAD A DIVINE PRINTED.

(TITANIC TRUE BELIEVER) — A DIVINELY-INSPIRED 'NO-PRIZE' WINNER.

(KEEPER OF THE FLAME) — ONE WHO RECRUITS A NEW COMER TO MARVEL'S ROLLICEN RANKS.

(PERMANENT MARVELITE MAXIMUS) — ANYONE POSSESSING ALL FOUR OF THE OTHER TITLES.

(FEARLESS FRONT FAGER) — AN HONORARY TITLE, BESTOWED FOR DEVOTION TO MARVEL ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY.

Dear Stan and Jim,

WOW! That one word keeps ringing in my addled, anguished, and atomized cerebrum. The cause? Naught but Jim Steranko and the premiere issue of SHIELD. Steranko is undoubtedly the most mind-shattering, metaphysical-schitzinizing, mystical-substantiating scenographer in this vast Einsteinian universe. He's here and he's now! Jaunty Jim is Marshall McLuhan, Andy Warhol and Rudi Gernreich all condensed into a single and uniquely gifted mortal. This is exactly where it's at (why do they keep looking?). Marvel always speaks the language of today, but Steranko touches on tomorrow. There are more realistic artists around (passed out somewhere in that nefarious Marvel bullpen), but none capture the essence of our dynamic, perplexing, and provocative age like Steranko. The comic, which had become aesthetically stagnant and totally divorced from the tempo of cultural change during the '50's, is now a symbol of the new "global village." It records, albeit through exaggeration, the sociological impact of modern technology, and translates that force into a boundless arena of total involvement. And, of this translation, Jim Steranko is master. So, until Jasper Sitwell turns commie, make mine Marvel. It's the only way to phlie.

Steve Shuchart, c/o AET House
828 Broadway, New Orleans, La. 70118

Hey, Steve, we turned your masterful missive over to SHIELD's CODE and CIPHER CENTER 'cause we weren't quite sure what you had in mind! After that, Jaunty Jim took the letter home, framed it and hung it above his drawing board!

Dear Stan and Jim,

NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD #1 was utterly marvelous. Jim Steranko makes a great team. His plots and subplots are magnificently interwoven. His art is simply psychedelic. Jaunty Jim is by far your best artist. By the way, the sinister Scorpio is none other than that dastardly demon, the Druid. SHIELD has some of the best titles I've ever read, such as "Who is Scorpio?", "Behold the Savage Sky!", "And the Dragon Cried . . . Death!", "When Comes . . . Black Noon!", and "Today Earth Died!" Keep up the fantastic work. From a simple filler, you have one of the best running series in comics history. By the way, anyone who wants to know anything about the Comics Code can go to the public library. There, under art literature, they shall find a book called *Americana in Four Colors*. This is published by the Comics Code and gives a number of interesting facts. Don't Yield — Buy SHIELD!

Steven Grant, 5805 Meadowood Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53711

Thanks for the note, we're sure a number of readers will want to know about comic censorship and the CODE! By the way, Steve, Scorpio isn't the Druid, either! We told you he was tricky!

Gentlemen:

Like most of your other readers, I never entertained the least idea of writing you — that is until now. I've just completed the first edition of SHIELD comics and cannot quite believe what I have read. For many years I have followed most of the Marvel characters and of course have my many likes and dislikes about them. With this edition, though, you have outdone yourselves by coming up with one of the most interesting stories I have ever read — in comics or in "legitimate" literature. In fact, I believe you have succeeded in bringing the comic book into that category on the basis of this one issue alone. This is not to say that the rest of your work is the typical adult's conception of a comic book — strictly for kids — far from it. Your magazines have always been so far superior to any other in the field that any comparison is ludicrous. With your latest effort, however, you have come up with something that will, if continued, revamp

the entire industry. The artwork — especially the center pages — was magnificent as usual. What you really deserve compliments on, though, is the truly fine blending of several more-or-less complex plot lines into one fluid story, and in the space of only twenty pages. Above all, the last two pages are the finest I have ever read in a comic magazine, and surpass most attempts at fiction that are being made today. Again, congratulations on a brilliant job, and as long as you continue to put out such magnificent work, you have a devoted reader waiting for your next issue.

Mike Richmond, 219 W. Trinity Ave.
Durham, N. C.

Glad you liked it, Mike! We have to tell it like it is: the response to SHIELD's first solo ish knocked us out with its unflinching approval on this new style of story! Jim tells us he promises to make every script as daring, dynamic and different as possible! And when this guy says it . . . look out!

Dear Stan, Nick and Val:

According to my vast resources (which are seldom accurate) I think I may have an answer to everybody's question: who was Scorpio? He was a humanoid-android created by Doctor Doom who is being paid a considerable amount of money (by what HYDRA agents there are who weren't on HYDRA Island when it was demolished) to destroy SHIELD. This tends to explain where the power of the key to the Zodiac really comes from — the secret arsenal of Doctor Doom in Latveria. Even more startling are results which just came from my Tele-computation-affecter that also point out that Scorpio could be Jimmy Woo, fulfilling his oath that he made in ish #166 of STRANGE TALES. Scorpio mentioned such an oath on page 16 panel 4 in ish #1 of NICK FURY. On the 6th panel of that page Scorpio says "Scorpio is well-versed in the ways of acrobatics!" — Just as an FBI man would be. I can't say in words how I feel inside about Jim Steranko's plots! They're even better than his art, which in itself is . . . ?????!! Although Flip Mason had nothing whatsoever to do with the SHIELD story, Jim had him fit in there nicely, being the cause of the battle in which the mysterious Scorpio died. DIED? And just Flip's being there made the story much more realistic. The Scorpion on the racing driver's wrist has, I believe, no significance with the story. It merely arouses the reader's attention and is soon forgotten in the action that follows. My Tele-computation-affecter reports that the driver, Count Julio Scarlatti, was probably born under the sign of Scorpio and that is why he wears that tattoo. Further investigation with my Historator proves the report of the Tele-computation-affecter to be correct. COUNT SCARLATTI, JULIO: Born 1929. Parents, Duke of Conlavier in Latveria, Duchess Scarlatti . . . Veria, Vera. Schooled, Private tutor Baron Von Herscuved. Special training in archery, horsemanship, rifle and pistol shooting and automobile handling. Awarded Triple-cross of Courage and Conlavier Honour Medal during Latverian Civil War in 1947 for acts beyond the call of duty. Left Latveria in 1949 and moved to Nova, New Mexico when his parents died. The Scarlatti residence was submitted to the Prime Minister who made it his palace. An unfortunate accident in 1967 destroyed the structure. (The Silver Surfer's retribution on the Prime Minister's hirelings. FF #61). Identifying marks: Tattoo of the sign of Scorpio on right wrist, green-gray eyes, swarthy complexion.

Lincoln Park, Michigan 48146

The elusive Scorpio was indeed Julio Scarlatti, but was he the real one or just posing in one of his many identities? Next month's SHIELD saga brings the malevolent master of disguise back again to haunt Fury with incredible danger . . . replete with a new set of clues to his identity! Be sitting down when you read this one, Ralph! And, 'til then, keep them cards and letters coming in! Peace, baby!

NEXT

"WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO SCORPIO?"